

32. ON THE IDENTITY OF TWO SPECIES OF *OLDENLANDIA* L.
(RUBIACEAE)

Oldenlandia wightii Hook. f. Brit. Ind. 3: 66. 1880 was described on the basis of a collection from Western Peninsula by R. Wight. It was distinguished from *O. umbellata* L. Sp. Pl. 119. 1753 based on capitate cymes, sessile flowers and distant calyx teeth equalling the capsules. In course of taxonomic study of *Hedyotis* L. and *Oldenlandia* L., specimens of both the taxa extant in Indian herbaria and some selected ones from foreign herbaria have been examined. In *O. wightii* Hook. f. (l.c.) the inflorescence is umbellate as evident from the type cited below but erroneously described as capitate with sessile flowers. In *O. umbellata* calyx teeth vary from lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate or triangular. In the early stage of the fruit the calyx teeth are close and lanceolate, but on maturity of capsules they are distant, short and subulate equalling the capsules. Thus the variations observed in *O. umbellata* L. cover the characteristics of *O. wightii* for which the latter cannot be treated as distinct and deserves to be reduced to a synonym. The correct nomenclature of the species is as follows.

Hedyotis puberula (G. Don) Arn. Pug. 342. 1836. *Oldenlandia puberula* G. Don, Gen. Syst. 3: 530. 1834. (Type: Herb. Heyne s.n. in Wall. Cat. 884! K-W). *O. umbellata* L. Sp. Pl. 119. 1753 (Type: Malabar, Linn.?). *H. umbellata* Lamk. Tabl. Encycl. 1: 273. 1791. non Walt. 1788. *H. puberula* R. Br. ex Wall. Cat. No. 884. 1829, nom. nud., *H. linearifolia* R. Br. ex Wall. Cat. no. 870. 1829, nom. nud. *O. wightii* Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 3: 66. 1880. (Type: Western Peninsula, Hb. Wight s.n. K photo CAL!) *synon. nov.*

Oldenlandia maheshwari Sant. et Merch. in Journ. Ind. Bot. Soc. 42A: 213. tt. 1-6. 1964

was distinguished from *O. stocksii* Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 3: 67. 1880 for having "stem pubescent, flowers solitary, calyx teeth ovate-oblong or oblong, longer than the corolla; corolla smaller ($\pm 2 \times 1$ mm), white or pink in colour. Examination of the type material of *O. stocksii* shows that it bears, *inter alia*, pubescent stem and solitary, axillary or terminal flower; calyx teeth are also sometimes ovate-oblong or oblong and longer than the corolla; corolla varies from 3 mm to 6 mm in length. There are other specimens where the flower is still smaller. Colour of the flower in *O. maheshwarii* is reported to be white or pink while in *O. stocksii* it is blue. It cannot be checked on herbarium specimens and there is hardly any record of flower colour available in the herbarium. It is white or pink in *O. maheshwarii* indicating variation, and taxonomic differences cannot stand on colour of the flower only. Thus none of the differences noted by Santapau and Merchant stand and the distinctions of the taxa are not tenable. Hence it is relegated to a synonym. The nomenclature is as follows.

Hedyotis stocksii (Hook. f.) Rolla Rao et Hemadri in Ind. For. 99(6): 378. 1973. *O. stocksii* Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 3: 67. 1880. (Syntypes: Concon, Stocks s.n.! K.; Malabar, Bababudan Hills, Stocks s.n.! K, CAL; *ibid.* Lawson s.n.! K). *H. stocksii* Hook. f. & Thoms. in Sched.! (CAL, K). *O. maheshwarii* Sant. et Merch. in Journ. Ind. Bot. Soc. 42A: 213. tt. 1-6. 1964. (Type: Mahabaleshwar, 13th Sept. 1959, Y. A. Merchant 1267! BLAT.). *H. maheshwarii* (Sant. et Merch.) Rolla Rao et Hemadri in Ind. For. 99(6): 376. 1973, *synon. nov.*